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NEWS RELEASE

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About 54,100 Without Power Due to Wind Storm ***Ice storm restoration slowed by new bout of severe weather***

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 12, 2009) – About 54,100 Kentucky electric customers remain without power as the result of a severe wind storm that swept across the state yesterday, according to figures compiled by the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC).

That number is in addition to the 26,200 customers still without power due to last month's massive ice storm. Nearly all of those are in western Kentucky.

Power outages statewide total 81,411 customers.

With wind gusts reported in excess of 70 miles per hour, yesterday's storm knocked out power to at least 150,000 homes and businesses, according to reports received by the PSC from regulated utilities. Most of the wind damage was in the eastern half of the state.

Although the wind storm caused relatively few new outages in western Kentucky, electric providers are reporting that it hampered most restoration work yesterday. Saturated ground due to heavy rains is expected to slow restoration in some areas over the next few days.

About 742,500 (96 percent) of the nearly 770,000 customers who lost power at the peak of the ice storm had power restored before the wind storm arrived. It is unknown how many of the customers who lost power during the ice storm lost it again yesterday.

The latest outage numbers are:

	Ice storm	Wind storm	Total
Jurisdictional utilities	16,923	54,083	71,006
TVA-served cooperatives	9,038	1,117	10,155
Municipal utilities	250	none	250
TOTAL	26,211	55,200	81,411

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The numbers include utilities within the PSC's jurisdiction as well as rural electric cooperatives within the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) system and municipal utilities. Information on the electric cooperatives was provided by the Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives and on the municipal utilities by the Municipal Electric Power Association of Kentucky.

The PSC is urging residents affected by the wind storm to check electric connections and meters for damage. Damaged connections or meters must be repaired before power can be restored to a home or business.

Falling or sagging power lines may have damaged the connections between the utility company's overhead line and a customer's electric system. The connections are usually in the form of a masthead – a conduit connected to the service line – or, in older homes, an eyebolt which holds the line in place and an insulated line leading to the meter. In some cases, the meter or meter base may also be damaged.

Damaged or improperly repaired connections or meters could pose an electrical or fire hazard once power is restored.

"It is critical that damaged connections be repaired by a qualified professional and inspected before power is restored," PSC Chairman David Armstrong said. "In past outages, fires and severe damage have been caused by damaged or improperly repaired service connections."

Repairing a service connection or meter base is the responsibility of the individual customer.

The meter base is the square or rectangular box on which the meter itself is mounted. It belongs to the property owner. The meter itself – the circular, glass-enclosed portion that attaches to the meter base - is the property of the utility company.

Customers with damaged connections or meters should take the following steps:

- Notify the utility company that the service connection, meter base and/or meter is damaged. The utility can then make sure that the line is not energized until repairs are completed.
- In the event that only the meter itself is damaged, contact the utility to have it repaired or replaced and your service restored.
- Contact an electrician to repair the meter base or service connection. The repair work can be done prior to power being restored in an area, thus eliminating any additional delays.
- The electrician will obtain the proper meter base from the utility. Some utilities impose no charge for the meter base, but the customer will bear the installation cost.

- Have the repairs inspected by a state-certified inspector working for your local government. The electrician should be able to help arrange the inspection.
- Notify the utility when the repairs are complete and have been approved. A utility technician will install a new meter and restore the power.
- Keep all repair records and contact your property insurer.

Residents **SHOULD NOT** attempt to remove any branches, limbs or trees that have fallen across or are in contact with service connections or other utility lines. Notify the utility to arrange for the debris to be removed.

The PSC also reminds customers using a generator for temporary electrical power to do so in a manner that insures their safety and the safety of those working to restore power. Keys to safe operation of generators include:

- To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, generators should only be operated outside in well-ventilated areas. Do not operate generators in your garage.
- Make sure a generator is properly sized for the load you will place on it. Remember that starting an electric motor, such a refrigerator compressor, requires more electricity than the amount needed to keep it running. **DO NOT OVERLOAD YOUR GENERATOR.**
- Use only three-prong, grounded extension cords, properly rated for the load, to connect appliances to generators.
- **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FEED POWER INTO YOUR HOME BY ADAPTING AN EXTENSION CORD TO CONNECT A GENERATOR TO A WALL OUTLET. THIS CAN CAUSE A FIRE.**
- **DO NOT CONNECT A GENERATOR TO INSIDE WIRING IN ANY WAY UNLESS YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS IS EQUIPPED WITH A TRANSFER SWITCH THAT PREVENTS POWER FROM FLOWING BACK INTO (BACKFEEDING) THE WIRES THAT SUPPLY YOUR ELECTRICITY.**

Backfeeding poses a severe danger to workers attempting to restore electrical service. They can be severely injured or killed by power flowing back into lines which they assume are not carrying electricity. Also, if the line to your home or business becomes grounded, backfeeding can permanently damage your generator.

“Getting everybody’s power restored after a storm of this magnitude and especially in these very difficult working conditions is going to take some time,” Armstrong said. “People need to be patient and, above all, remain safe.”

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Energy and Environment Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in Kentucky and has approximately 100 employees.